

INDIAN RAILWAYS TECHNICAL SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION

(Estd. 1965, Regd. No.1329, Website<http://www.irtsa.net>)

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No:IRTSA/CHQ/Memo MOR/2017-4

Date:18-2-2017

**ShriSuresh Prabhu,
Hon'ble Minister for Railways,
Rail Bhawan, New Delhi.**

Respected Sir,

Subject :Measures to improve Safety on Railways– Appeal for Recognition of Indian Railways Technical Supervisors Association (IRTSA).

Reference: 1.Railway Board's letter No. 2017/E(LR)III/Ref/RB/1, dated 30.1.2017

- Regarding: Measures to improve Safety on Indian Railways

2. Report of Task Force on Safety, dated 10th Jan 2017.

3. Recommendations of:

i) Railway Accidents Inquiry Committee - 1968 (headed by Justice Wanchoo)

ii) Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee - 1978 (headed by Justice Sikri)

iii) Railway Safety Review Committee – 1998 (headed by Justice Khanna)

We seek your benign intervention on a matter of extreme importance for the sake of improved safety, efficiency and productivity on the Railways - which are bound to be jeopardised on account of the incomplete, partial and deviatory implementation of the comprehensive recommendations of the "Task Force on Safety" pertaining to Supervisors as had been done vide Railway Board's orders dated 30-1-2017 cited above.

1. BAN ON SUPERVISORS TO BE OFFICE BEARERS OF TRADE UNIONS – WITHOUT PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE FORUM TO REDRESS GRIEVANCES OF THE SUPERVISORS:

a) Consequent upon submission of the Report of the Task Force on Safety, the Railway Board vide its letter dated 30.1.2017 cited above (copy enclosed as Annexure-1), had decided that Supervisors working in all safety categories in erstwhile Grade Pay of Rs.4200 and above, should not be office bearers of trade unions after March 31st 2017.

b) The Railway Board had not made any alternative negotiating system for addressing the grievances of Supervisors. This is totally unconstitutional, unjust and deprives the Supervisors of their Constitutional right of Association and legal rights for representation and redressal of grievances.

c) This is an **incomplete, partial and deviatory** implementation of the Report of the Task Force as well as that of the Khanna Committee on Safety and **Railway Accidents Inquiry Committees 1968 and 1978 (cited above)**– which had strongly recommended for recognition of Supervisors' Association to discuss and resolve the demands and grievances.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS OF TASK FORCE ON SAFETY CONCERNING SUPERVISORS

Task Force on Safety had made following recommendations for the Supervisors:

38.3. Supervisors: Supervisors have traditionally been the front end managers and the back bone of Indian Railways. There has been a dilution in their

contribution to the well being of Railways as felt all across. This has been felt by the Group on Railway Safety, 1996 and also the Khanna Committee. (Kh I 3.2.3).

38.4. At the same time it is necessary to strengthen the hands of Supervisors to empower them.

38.5. Recommendations:

38.5.1. Supervisors should not be allowed to join Trade Unions. (Kh I 3.2.3).

38.5.2. They should be encouraged to form their own Association for collective bargaining and negotiation and should find a place in PNMs and PREM Group. Similar provision has already been done for the RPF Staff. (Kh I 3.2.4)

(Copy of recommendations pertaining to Supervisors made in the Report of Task Force on Safety, is enclosed as Annexure-2).

3. a) Recommendations of Task Force, as made in Para 38.5 are comprehensive and they cannot be segregated, diluted or partially implemented – without adverse impact on safety or further disillusionment among the Supervisors.
b) Railway Board's letters on banning Supervisors to be the office bearers of Trade Unions is a serious deviation from the recommendations of Task Force on Safety and denies them the right to represent, which is against the established law of natural justice.

4. NO RECOGNISED FORUM FOR TECHNICAL SUPERVISORS IN RAILWAYS AS IN OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

- a) There is no recognized organization to represent the Technical Supervisors (Junior Engineers/JEs and Senior Section Engineers/SSEs) on the Railways even though they are frontline Managers, although all other Departments – like CPWD, MES, Telecommunication (DoT) and Defence Inspection and Ordnance Factories all have recognized organizations of their counterparts in those Departments.
- b) This is the main root-cause for non-redressal of the grievances of this vital cadre - thereby causing widespread frustration amongst them due to lack of any machinery for discussion or redressal of their problems. *(List of Engineers Association in CPWD is enclosed as Annexure-3)*

5. A THREAT TO SAFETY ON RAILWAYS - AN ISSUE OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE:

- a) High level expert Committees have gone into each and every detail of Railway Safety and have suggested measures for its improvement. Railway Accidents Committee (Kunzru Committee) in 1962, Railway Accidents Inquiry Committee (headed by Justice Wanchoo) in 1968 and Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee (headed by Justice Sikri) in 1978 and Railway Safety Review Committee (headed by Justice Khanna) in 1998 went into the whole gamut of railway operational safety. *(Copy of Report of the Railway Accident Inquiry Committee-1968, headed by Justice Wanchoo, on Status and Grade of Supervisors is enclosed as Annexure-4)*
- b) **Most of the recommendations of these committees were accepted by Railways and implemented one after another – except for the 'Provision of a Recognised Forum for discussing & resolving the problems of Supervisory cadres on the Railways and for improvement of their status and Pay Scales.**
- c) Part of summary of recommendations of Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee 1978 (RAEC) and views of Ministry of Railways *is enclosed as Annexure-5)*

- d) All these Committees (headed by Justice Wanchoo, Justice Sikri and Justice Khanna) had recommended that the Supervisors, who are the front line managers, should have the right to represent their grievances. They all recommended that the Supervisors organization - as a separate Association - should be recognised.
- e) The recommendations of the four Accident Inquiry Committees for recognizing Supervisors' Association, were, unfortunately not accepted by the Railway – even though the recommendations were in the interest of the Safety on the Railways.
- f) Railway Reforms Committee (RRC) also made similar recommendations for Recognition of Supervisors Association in the interest of better management, Safety & efficiency on the Railways but even the same were also rejected by the Railways.
- g) **These committees recommended for recognition of a separate Association for them so that Technical supervisors who are having direct responsibilities for getting the work executed for safe running of trains should not be dependent on the Unions of the employees working under them to redress their grievances as this will create a negative influence and favoritism in the system.**

6. IRTSA BE RECOGNISED AS BEING THE OLDEST & THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION OF SUPERVISORS ON RAILWAYS

IRTSA (Indian Railways Technical Supervisors Association) (formed in November 1965) is over 51 years old Association (*registered under the Trade Union Act-1926*) and represents over 50,000 Technical Supervisors on the Indian Railways supervising a work force of nearly 8.2 lakh Railway men.

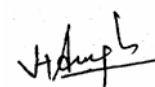
Recognition of IRTSA will go a long way not only in redressing the problems of Rail Engineers / Technical Supervisors – it will also substantially improve safety, efficiency & productivity on the Railways through greater job satisfaction & motivation of Front Line Engineers / Technical Supervisors.

(Aims, objectives & historical background of IRTSA are given in Annexure-6)

- 7. It is, therefore, requested that Indian Railways Technical Supervisors Association (IRTSA) may please be Recognised by the Railways to represent and to discuss the problems of Technical supervisors on Railways – as recommended by the Task Force on Safety.**

Thanking you, with kind regards,

Yours faithfully,



**Harchandan Singh,
General Secretary, IRTSA**

Enclosures: 6 Annexures

Copy for information & favourable consideration to:

1. **Chairman, Railway Board, Room No 236, Rail Bhavan, New Delhi – 110001**
2. **Member Staff, Railway Board, Room No.236, Rail Bhavan, New Delhi – 110001**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)

No. 2017/E(LR)III/Ref/RB/1 New Delhi, dated 30.01.2017

The General Managers,
All Zonal Railways.

Sub: Measures to Improve safety on Indian Railways.

As you are aware, Indian Railways have been operating on the principle of 'Safety First'. Certain recent accidents have once again put the issue of safety in prime focus. Hence, in order to bring about perceptible improvement in the safe running of trains, each and every aspect of railway working, which has a bearing on safety, is being minutely examined. The role of railwaymen, particularly those working in safety categories, needs to be critically watched. Therefore, such staff/supervisors need to be sensitised about primacy of safety in their working. They need to devote themselves fully to the onerous task of ensuring safety.

2. You would appreciate that Supervisors working in safety category posts play a pivotal role in ensuring safe running of trains. In the wake of the current situation, these Supervisors need to put in their best effort in order to ensure that the staff working under them are alert at all times. Since the Railways work 24/7, these Supervisors have to be vigilant all the time.

3. As per the extant rules, there is no bar for Supervisors to be members/office-bearers of a recognized Trade Union. It is also a fact that the office-bearers of the unions have to devote a substantial amount of time to attend to their additional responsibilities as Union office-bearers. Due to this, it has been observed that these Supervisors are hard-pressed for time and, therefore, they may not be able to give their undivided attention to their official duties.

4. In view of foregoing, it has been decided by the Board that Supervisors working in all safety categories in erstwhile GP of Rs.4200 and above, should not be office-bearers of a Trade Union after 31st March, 2017. However, there is no bar on their being enrolled as members of the Union.

Continued - 2

5. Therefore, recognised Union(s) on your Railway may be advised to make necessary adjustments by posting suitable relievers of such office-bearers latest by 31st March, 2017. Board may be kept apprised of the progress in this regard.


(Nirmala U Tirkey)
Dy. Director, Estt. (LR)II

Copy to :

1. General Secretary/AIRF,
4, State Entry Road,
New Delhi-110055.
2. The General Secretary/NFIR,
3, Chelmsford Road,
New Delhi-110055.

EXCERPTS FROM
REPORT OF TASK FORCE ON SAFETY
10th Jan 2017

- 38.3. **Supervisors:** Supervisors have traditionally been the front end managers and the backbone of Indian Railways. There has been a dilution in their contribution to the well being of Railways as felt all across. This has been felt by the Group on Railway Safety, 1996 and also the Khanna Committee. (Kh I 3.2.3).
- 38.4. At the same time it is necessary to strengthen the hands of Supervisors to empower them.
- 38.5. **Recommendations:**
- 38.5.1. Supervisors should not be allowed to join Trade Unions. (Kh I 3.2.3).
[Establishment IR Directorate: three months]
- 38.5.2. They should be encouraged to form their own Association for collective bargaining and negotiation and should find a place in PNMs and PREM Group. Similar provision has already been done for the RPF Staff. (Kh I 3.2.4)
[Establishment IR Directorate: three months]
- 38.5.3. D&AR Powers of Senior Supervisors was completely withdrawn as a consequence of the 6th Pay Commission. This should be restored.
[Establishment Directorate: three months]
- 38.5.4. Likewise, D&AR Powers of Junior Scale Officers should also be restored. There is, in reality, a need to restore all D&AR Powers to pre 6th PC provisions.
[Establishment Directorate: three months]
- 38.5.5. Supervisors should be empowered to grant spot cash awards to their staff to the extent of Rs. 500 in each case subject to an annual limit of Rs. 10,000. (Kh I 3.4.2) [Finance Directorate: one month]

Annexure - 3

Position in Central P.W.D. CPWD is the premier agency of the Central Government operating throughout the country for construction, maintenance and repairs of all works and buildings financed from civil works, budget, except departments who have their own Engineering Units, recognize the Association of Junior Engineers and other Engineers who are all recruited with the qualification of Diploma in Engineering & Graduation in Engineering.

Recognized Services Association in CPWD Following Associations are recognised in CPWD:

1. Central Engineering Services (Class I) Direct Recruits Association.
2. Central Engineering Services (Class II) Direct Recruits Association.
3. Central P.W.D. Engineers Association.
4. Central P.W.D. Junior Engineers Association (India) New Delhi (with branches at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Guwahati).
5. The Graduate Junior Engineers' Association.
6. The AMIE Junior Engineers' Association.
7. Central P.W.D. Engineering & Drawing Staff Association.

REPORT OF THE RAILWAY ACCIDENT INQUIRY COMMITTEE – 1968
Headed by Justice K. N. Wanchoo (August 1969)
Part-II, Chapter - II

Status and grade of Supervisors

96. Loss of self confidence among Supervisors:

During our tour of the various Railways and the discussions with the heads of the administrations and other senior officers it was repeatedly pointed out to us that while supervisors have a vital role to play in the efficient and smooth functioning of Railways, their status, prestige and authority have suffered greatly in recent years; they have generally become ineffective and a feeling of helplessness and frustration has overcome most of them. They feel that they are not able to take work from the staff or to enforce discipline. Cases of manhandling, assaults, or intimidation of supervisors at the hands of employees themselves or their agents were related to us and the evidence pointed to the fact that the administration had not been able to provide adequate security or legal assistance.

97. A retired Chairman of Railway Board, in his evidence before us, pointed out that among the most unfortunate things which have happened in recent years one is that the quality of supervisors has greatly deteriorated and that today the weakest link in the administration chain is the senior supervisor. A retired member of Railway Board stated that the supervisory staff have lost heart and that they find it extremely difficult to pull up the staff.

98. The Railways, in their reply to the questionnaire, stated that the authority of senior supervisors has greatly weakened. Some stated that they do not possess adequate powers for taking disciplinary actions against the staff. Others held the view that they are reluctant to exercise whatever disciplinary powers are already delegated to them. Some railways pointed out that supervisors have a feeling that they would not get adequate support from those above them because of their anxiety to get work done. One Railway stated that supervisors' inability to enforce discipline is primarily because of spirit of indiscipline fostered among the workers by the unions. By and large, according to this Railway, supervisors are still a disciplined force on the Railways and that it is not too late to rebuild their authority and rehabilitate their position.

103. We are entirely in agreement with the Railway Administration that to strengthen the measure and quality of supervision over the working of staff, it is essential that the position and authority of senior supervisors should be restored. **Earlier in this chapter we have already recommended that senior supervisors should be recognised as junior members of management and their organisation in a separate association should be fostered...**

105. We are entirely in agreement with the Railway Administrations that to strengthen the measure and quality of supervision over the working of staff, it is essential that the position and authority of senior supervisors should be restored. Earlier in this chapter we have already recommended that senior supervisors should be recognised as junior members of management and that their organisation should be fostered. We would offer following suggestions for consideration:.....

iii) **To improve the status of senior supervisors, to impart them greater self-confidence and to broaden their channels of promotion, we consider that wherever there is a large concentration of staff working under a senior supervisor, the post should be upgraded to gazetted status Class-II.**

VIEWS OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS ON PART II OF THE REPORT OF RAILWAY ACCIDENTS ENQUIRY COMMITTEE - 1978

Summary of Observations/Recommendations made by the Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee 1978 in Part II of their report and proposed views of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) thereon

Item No.	Observation/Recommendation	Views of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board)
(1)	(2)	(3)

CHAPTER III—THE HUMAN ELEMENT

- ✓ 6 Membership of supervisors in staff unions is not consistent with the position of supervisors as a part of the management. The expert modalities of how this is to be achieved requires consideration by the Government. Under examination.
- (Para 126)

2

- | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|-----|--|---|
| ✓ 7 | Firmness is as important as fairness and sympathy in Administration's style and strategy for dealing with its employees. It is the responsibility of the higher echelons of Railway Administration to create confidence among front line supervisors and officers that, so long as they act in good faith and are not high handed or vindictive, they will be back in ensuring discipline and proper work-standards. Equally, Government also must act in such a way that the hands of Administration and its officers and supervisors are not weakened by extraneous political pressures. | The Government fully endorses this recommendation of the Committee. |
- (Paras 127 & 128)

AIMS, OBJECTS & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF IRTSA

IRTSA was formed in November, 1965, with an objective to unite & strive for better service conditions and emoluments of the Technical Supervisors on the Indian Railways. Prior to formation of IRTSA, there was no platform or organization to represent this vital Middle Management Category of Technical Supervisors on the Railways. Consequently the category had suffered tremendously at the hands of First and Second Pay Commissions due to lack of any forum to represent them before either of these forums (*set up between 1946 - 1948 & 1957 - 1959 respectively*).

On November 1, 1965, initiative was taken by a group of Apprentice Mechanics & Ex-Apprentice Mechanics of Northern Railway, Lucknow, to form an Association to represent them at various levels. The movement was spread immediately to all other zonal Railways and called them for a meeting at ICF Chennai, in the last week of November, 1965, The meeting was attended by representatives from each of the 9 Zonal Railways and 3 Production Units.

Finally an Association was formed on 27th November, 1965, at Chennai and team of office bearers were formed with representation from all Zones and Production Units.

Association was initially named as Indian Railways Apprentice Mechanics & Ex-Apprentice Mechanics Association. Within a year thereof, the name of the Association was changed to INDIAN RAILWAYS TECHNICAL SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION (IRTSA), in a historic All India Conference held at New Delhi, on 27th November, 1966. The Conference was largely attended and widely publicized in the media. The Association worked in coordination with Indian Railways Foremen Association - which was formed in 1964 and which was finally merged with IRTSA in August, 1970 during the All India Joint Convention held at Ajmer.

IRTSA has a strong organization and has made remarkable achievements – continuously struggling for the betterment of Technical Supervisors and Railway men at large during the last nearly 51 years in spite of the fact that it has not been given a '*de-jure*' recognition.